Bluffton First Mennonite Church

*Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* (Dan Hotchkiss)

**A New Path Together**

FMC Retreat: **Saturday, Sept 8, 2018 Coffee @ 8:00 am** (for the early birds) **Childcare @ 8:45 Retreat – 9 am – 1 pm** (working lunch provided)

**Grace Mennonite Church (Pandora)**

“**Religion** changes people; no one touches holy ground and stays the same. Religious leaders stir the pot by pointing to the contrast between life as it is and life as it should be and urging us to close the gap. Religious insights provide the handhold that people need to criticize injustice, rise above self-interest, and take risks to achieve healing in a wounded world. Religion at its best is no friend to the status quo.

**Organization**, on the other hand, conserves. Institutions capture, schematize, and codify persistent patterns of activity. …conservation is what institutions do. A well-ordered congregation lays down schedules, puts policies on paper, places people in positions, and generally brings order out of chaos. Organizations can be flexible, creative, and iconoclastic, but only by resisting some of their most basic instincts.

… The stability of a religious institution is a necessary precondition to the instability religious transformation brings. The need to balance both sides of this paradox—the transforming power of religion and the stabilizing power of organization—makes leading congregations a unique challenge.” (Hotchkiss, p. 1)

**Glossary of working terms**

**Governance:** “A unified structure for making governance decisions. …includ[ing] articulating mission, vision, and strategy; delegating the authority to achieve these things; and ensuring that authority is used responsibly and well. … The purpose of a governance structure is to deploy the congregation’s power in a way that is both effective and legitimate. (p. 6-7) … Governance means “owning” the congregation, holding and controlling its human and material resources, and making sure that they are used to serve its mission.” (p. 49)

**Ministry:** “ ‘*Ministry’* is the rest of what a congregation does—the daily work of building a community, managing resources, and transforming lives. … Ministry is the congregation’s practical work of changing lives in ways that fit its mission, acting out its values, and achieving its goals.” (p. 50)

**Committees:** “Committees help the board to govern… A committee gathers information, drafts a policy, or prepares in other ways to report back to the body that appointed it. …a committee is responsible to the board (or to the congregation), and its work product always goes back to its parent body.” (p. 53-54)

**Teams:** “… teams help do the ministry with leadership from staff… Teams exist to achieve practical results. … A team… is responsible to the staff, and its work product flows outward to the congregation or the world.” (p. 53-54)

**Authority:** “power that is legitimate” (p. 7)

**Power:** “the ability to make things happen” (p. 7)

**Policy:** aka “Board Policies”“Policies provide a framework for decisions to be made away from the board table. By policy the board fixes responsibility for making decisions, protects human and material resources against loss, and sets standards for the conduct of the congregation’s work. By policy the board takes hold of the big picture, so that it can safely leave all smaller matters to be decided elsewhere.” (p. 79)

Board policies are developed to follow *Civil Law* (what not-for-profit religious organizations may and may not do) and *Foundational Documents,* i.e. *“*denominational rulebooks, articles of incorporation, constitution, bylaws.”

**Guidelines/Procedures:** aka “Staff Policies” are the day to day working documents that evolve from the Board Policy(s) and conform to higher level policies by articulating the more specific ways the work is done. [For instance, the board may establish a Board Policy regarding use of the building by outside people or groups. Staff Policy articulates the particulars of this resource management.]

**Essential Ministries:** (not in Hotchkiss) Actions that are vital to the organizing and running of a church community. What we cannot do without and still be a church. In other words, those things we do that make us a congregation/church.

**Passion Ministries:** (not in Hotchkiss) The organizational (program) actions of the congregation or wider church that we do for a period of time; and are not written into the constitution or by-laws. These activities may be one time events or last for decades; often instigated in response to a perceived need within the congregation or beyond.